

**Marine Advisory Committee
October 1, 2013
Milton, Florida**

The Marine Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Jeff Marker, Rick Harris, and Scott Mason. Also present were the County Administrator, Hunter Walker; Chris Verlinde, Marine Extension Agent; Roger Blaylock, County Engineer and Avis Whitfield, Public Works Director. Chairman Jeff Marker called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m.

The minutes of the June 4, 2013 meeting were approved.

BOATING RESTRICTION REQUEST

Mr. Walker stated that there had been a request for a no wake sign to be posted at the Oyster Pile Boat Ramp in Bagdad. He added that this did fit the FWC model and typically they had been allowing no wake restrictions around the boat ramps. Mr. Marker questioned who was making the request and added that if there are problems it is something that needs to be addressed. He stated that it concerned him that we don't know who is making the request since typically there would be individuals voicing their complaints. Mr. Harris asked if this had been brought up in the past and said that he would be in favor of it. He added that he didn't think it would impede boaters. He said that it would be up to the FWC as to whether signs could be posted. Mr. Harris then made a motion for the Marine Advisory Committee to make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve wake restrictions at the oyster pile boat ramp in Bagdad and it was passed without objection.

CHAIRMAN/MEMBER ISSUES

Mr. Marker asked if there were any issues to bring before the board. Mr. Harris said that he had spoken with Kevin Brown who is Rep. Broxson's Administrative Assistant about some help

in getting oyster or clam shell here as well as in East Bay and he provided the

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Agriculture asking that attention be given to our waterway as well as stating that we would like to be a part of their rebuilding efforts since we do have a small oyster economy here and should be getting some regular help from them.

Ms. Verlinde stated a report came out recently about the collapse of the fisheries and a declaration of disaster was issued by the Treasury Dept. which addressed the fisheries failure in the panhandle with questions being raised on whether that includes East Bay and Cedar Key.

She added that it is not really clear but thinks it would be important to start working at the federal level since that is where decisions will be made. Mr. Marker said we should get a letter drafted and try to become a part of their ongoing program. Ms. Verlinde volunteered to draft a letter. Mr. Walker suggested that when Mr. Harris and Mr. Gibson are speaking with the representative from Dept. of Agriculture, that they inquire as to whether it would help if the county sent a letter. Ms. Verlinde said it would be a good idea to send letters to Cong. Miller, Rep. Nelson and the local representatives.

Ms. Verlinde stated that as far as the NRDA projects, the FL Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) did submit a request for oyster restoration in East Bay but it didn't make it to the state Restore list although it is still in the NRDA projects. She

added that it would be a matter of calling DACS and ask that it be resubmitted.

Ms. Verlinde said the oyster shells in Apalachicola primarily stay there because that is where they come from there and they are very protective of them. She added that we would be working on a management agreement to put out some off the substrate grow out cages. Mr. Harris said they are trying to do that in Apalachicola but that there is a lot of opposition to it. There is a strong movement for the floating cages and some interest in this area if the oystermen were able to lease the water column instead of just the bottom as they are now. Ms. Verlinde said in order to change the law, you would have to get an aquaculture lease and there is not one of those in East Bay. She added that there is only a 10 acre spot that Mr. Nichols has but that is actually a different kind of lease and there can't be any changes made to it.

type project, using 6-8 of the cages and do what is called a management agreement. She said there is a lot of interest there but on the research side it's still up in the air as far as the possibility of it.

Mr. Marker introduced Scott Walker as a prospective member to this committee, representing District 3. Mr. Walker is a local fisherman who has lived in Chumuckla for 15 years. He does a lot of fishing in the gulf and bay. Mr. Marker said that since we have been a man short on this committee we have run into problems in having a quorum and if Mr. Walker is interested in serving on this committee, he would like for about being appointed. Mr. Marker added that our success in the past has been because of people serving that have knowledge of what is going on in the waterway. Hunter Walker said that Com. Salter has been looking for someone to serve on this committee and he will be glad to discuss it with him.

It could also be looked at as a demonstration research him to be introduced to Com. Salter

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PROJECTS

ISSUES UPDATE

Boater Registration Fees as of September 25, 2013 is \$121,926.

Mr. Marker asked if there were any boat ramps that needed maintenance dredging. Mr. Whitfield said that in the low winter tides a better inspection could be done and it would be determined at that time if there are any that need to be dredged.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is scheduled for November 5, 2013 at 5:00p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:24p.m.

phone number of someone in Tallahassee who is with the Department of Agriculture. He said that he and Pasco Gibson have a teleconference scheduled for Thursday, October 3rd and they will be asking for direction on how to get more support. Mr. Marker asked if we had written a letter to any of our representatives or the Dept. of Agriculture to formally make a request for attention to be given to our oyster beds here as well as Apalachicola. Mr. Walker said there are some oyster projects included on our NRDA list and we have asked them to specifically focus on that particular area. He added that he didn't know if letters had been sent outside of the applications that are currently pending. Mr. Marker said he would like for the committee to draft a resolution and send it to the Dept. of